

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 1989--FIRST LEGISLATIVE DAY

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IN JOINT CONVENTION

GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

The hour having arrived, set by House Joint Resolution No. 5, the Senate met with the House in Joint Convention.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. Speaker Wilder, President of the Joint Convention.

On motion of Senator Darnell, the roll call of the Senate was dispensed with.

On motion of Representative Naifeh, the roll call of the House was dispensed with.

Thereupon, the Clerk of the Senate read House Joint Resolution No. 5 authorizing the Joint Convention.

On motion, Representative Naifeh moved that the President appoint a Committee composed of six (6) members from the Senate and six (6) members from the House to notify the Governor that the Joint Convention is in session and awaiting his arrival, which motion prevailed.

Mr. President Wilder appointed a Select Committee composed of Senators Albright, Cohen, Darnell, Davis, Montgomery and Womack; Representatives Byrd, Davis (Cocke), DeBerry, Miller, Naifeh and Webb. Senator Cohen will serve as Chairman of the Committee.

Without objection, the Joint Convention will be in recess pending the arrival of the Governor.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. President Wilder.

Without objection, the roll calls of the Senate and House were dispensed with.

Senator Cohen announced the Governor of the State of Tennessee at the entrance to the House.

President Wilder asked the committee to escort the Governor to please come forward.

President Wilder introduced the Honorable Ned McWherter, Governor of the State of Tennessee.

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1989 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

BY GOVERNOR NED MCWHERTER

Governor Wilder. Speaker Murray. Members of the General Assembly. To the distinguished members of the Supreme Court. To the Constitutional Officers. And most of all, to the people of Tennessee.

I begin by thanking you again for the privilege you have given me to serve as your chief executive.

Since the end of the Civil War, the Governor and the General Assembly have come together in this room to try to do what is best for the prosperity and the security of the citizens of this state.

It is important for each of us to pause and remember that our government in Tennessee is a sacred institution. It is older than most of the democracies in the world, and it is greater than any governor or elected official.

Two years ago, the people of Tennessee elected me to lead this government. The question before us today is how well, how far, and how fast this Administration has gone toward responding to the needs of this state.

Experience teaches that it is easy for politicians to talk about grand visions for the future. But we should question the value of visions that look good on paper, yet remain forever on the shelf.

I submit that the true measure of a leader's vision is not in the rhetoric, but in the results.

When I asked to be your chief executive, I tried to speak plainly about what I wanted to do for the future of Tennessee. Now, as then, my vision for Tennessee can be expressed in simple terms.

I want a Tennessee where every boy and girl can grow up healthy, get a good education, get a decent job in the area where they grew up, and settle down to have families of their own.

The vision is simple--perhaps too simple for some--but it has established the priorities and given direction to the policies of this Administration.

Pursuing our vision has meant that my first priority--every week of every month--has been the effort to get more jobs for Tennessee. All the trips and phone calls and meetings do not show up on my schedule, but they are there.

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Two years ago I promised a 95 County Jobs Plan that would share opportunity more equally among every region of Tennessee. I am pleased to report that with your help, Tennessee has just completed the best two years of economic growth in our history.

In 1987 Tennessee was third in the nation in the growth of new jobs. In 1988 the growth of new investments not only surpassed 1987, it surpassed every year since we've been keeping records.

For our urban centers, the growth in new jobs has brought unemployment down to its lowest level in nine years. But equally important, we have succeeded in bringing thousands of new jobs to dozens of smaller communities.

Although our success has come largely from basic hard work, Tennesseans need to know that much of this success resulted from the commitment of this body to low taxes, balanced budgets and sound fiscal management.

I cannot promise that the record growth in new jobs can sustain its present pace. I can promise that I will continue to work as hard as I humanly can, and do everything within my power as Governor to strengthen our foundation for prosperity.

If our vision includes economic development in each region of our state, then it must also include the improvement and expansion of Tennessee's roads. Three years ago the Legislature voted to begin an aggressive program of road construction. Today, we have under contract more than \$480 million in road projects--the largest program in Tennessee's history.

I cannot overstate the value of this road program in recruiting new jobs. It promises to ease the congestion in our cities, and open up our rural counties to markets they have never had.

I am asking the General Assembly to join with me to finish what we have started. This task will be my leading priority for the 1989 legislative session. Apart from a balanced budget, the completion of the road program will dominate the attention and commitment of the Administration above all other issues for the next 60 days.

Last month one of our leading newspapers looked back on the first two years of this Administration. They noted among our successes building roads and attracting new jobs.

They also described a number of other issues as "Promises to Keep." The description is fair, and it is appropriate that together we look back at this Administration's "Promises to Keep".

When I became your Governor, I promised to continue and build upon the momentum of Tennessee's education program. Since 1986, test scores have continued to climb in our high schools and our

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universities. Enrollment in our literacy program has grown from 3,000 to 40,000.

We are preparing a program for drop-outs that will reduce class size and place one-room schools in our low income communities. We have strengthened our universities with a Chairs of Excellence program that is a model for the nation.

We have raised teachers' salaries and cut teachers' paperwork. My goal is a 21st Century classroom that will make us competitive in the world marketplace.

We are far from where we need to be. But these successes, and others to come, are possible only because those working to improve education have joined together in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation.

Two years ago this Administration made a commitment to do something about the plague of drug abuse that is tearing apart our schools and neighborhoods. Since that time, we have joined with local communities in all 95 counties to establish a Drug Free Alliance that has raised locally more than a million dollars for drug prevention.

We have purchased additional drug rehabilitation beds for our mental health facilities. We have started drug education programs in every school district.

We have implemented drug treatment programs in each of our juvenile facilities. We have coordinated drug enforcement efforts by creating a drug task force in every judicial district to pool the resources of the TBI, the Department of Safety and local law enforcement.

And in a few days, I will come to the General Assembly to ask for your approval of legislation that will be among the toughest and most far-reaching anti-drug laws in America.

*Two years ago the Administration made a commitment to expand and improve our services for Tennessee's children. Since then, legislation has been enacted that will provide pregnancy leave for mothers, strengthen child support, broaden access to daycare, and expand health care for children under age six.

We have reorganized the Commission on Children and Youth. We have achieved accreditation for three of our juvenile centers. We are ready to award a contract for a new youth center in East Tennessee, and we will begin this summer replacing the old Spencer Youth Center here in Nashville.

Our plans call for removing juvenile programs from the Department of Correction, and a central intake system that will

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better evaluate young people for the services they need.

We promised two years ago to work toward the goal of a health care system that was accessible and affordable for every Tennessean. Our efforts at times have been frustrated by federal policies beyond our control. But we have made substantial progress.

We have extended basic health care coverage to young children and catastrophic coverage to our elderly. We have expanded our program for the mentally retarded.

We have aided hospitals with high burdens of uncompensated care. And we intend, with your help, to move forward this year with legislation that will expand primary care in our rural counties as well as our urban centers.

This Administration promised that our efforts to encourage economic growth would not compromise our commitment to a clean environment. We have implemented a program that will help our industries reduce their generation of toxic waste.

We will be working with the Legislature to design a long term plan for the disposal and recycling of solid waste. And we have said to the Champion Paper Mill in North Carolina that 80 years is long enough, and that the day is over when they can use our rivers for a sewer.

Time does not permit me to address every issue before us. I intend to provide the Legislature with details of these and other issues in the coming weeks.

I close by acknowledging that each of you may have a different answer to the questions how well, how far, and how fast this Administration has come in two years. I understand at times there are those who feel we have moved with haste, while others want to do more and do it faster.

As always, I welcome your counsel and I respect you when we disagree. I ask only that in turn you remember a final promise I made two years ago.

I promised to be the best Governor that I am able and capable of being. For the remaining years of my Administration that will continue to be my promise to keep.

Thank You.

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President Wilder relinquishes the gavel to Mr. Speaker Murray, as President of the Joint Convention.

The purpose for which the Joint Convention was assembled having been accomplished, Mr. President Murray declared the Joint Convention dissolved.